User-centered systems design (UCSD) is a process focusing on usability throughout the entire development process and further throughout the system life cycle. It is based on the following key principles.

**User focus** – the goals of the activity, the work domain or context of use, the users’ goals, tasks and needs should early guide the development.

**Active user involvement** – representative users should actively participate, early and continuously throughout the entire development process and throughout the system lifecycle.

**Evolutionary systems development** – the systems development should be both iterative and incremental.

**Simple design representations** – the design must be represented in such ways that it can be easily understood by users and all other stakeholders.

**Prototyping** – early and continuously, prototypes should be used to visualize and evaluate ideas and design solutions in cooperation with the end users.

**Evaluate use in context** – baselined usability goals and design criteria should control the development.

**Explicit and conscious design activities** – the development process should contain dedicated design activities.

**A professional attitude** – the development process should be performed by effective multidisciplinary teams.

**Usability champion** – usability experts should be involved early and continuously throughout the development lifecycle.

**Holistic design** – all aspects that influence the future use situation should be developed in parallel.

**Processes customization** – the user-centered systems design process must be specified, adapted and/or implemented locally in each organization.

**A user-centered attitude** should always be established.

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